

REMARKS

Claims 2-23 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 14 and 15 are currently amended, Claims 19-23 are canceled without prejudice, and Claims 2-13 and 16-18 remain unchanged. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of Claim 18. The Examiner has withdrawn the indicated allowability of Claims 14 and 15.

Claims 14-17 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by either Runde (US 2,868,004) or Candor (US 3,491,387). Claims 2-17 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Manuel (US 3,827,262) in view of Feast (US 4,997,000) or Smith (US 2,732,701).

Independent Claims 14 and 15 have been amended to recite "the transporting device including a conveyor system with hanger supports transporting the laundry along a closed looped path." Neither Runde, Candor, Manuel, Feast, nor Smith disclose a transporting device including a conveyor system with hanger supports transporting the laundry along a closed looped path.

For these and other reasons, the prior art does not disclose the subject matter defined by independent Claims 14 and 15. Therefore, Claims 14 and 15 are allowable. Claims 2-13 and 16 depend from Claim 15 and are allowable for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

Independent Claim 17 recites a washing machine, comprising: a housing; means for producing an air stream disposed at said housing; means for carrying at least one item of laundry within said housing; and means for directing the air stream into the laundry items disposed in said housing; and means disposed in said housing for preliminary removal of water from the at least one laundry item disposed in said housing.

Claim 17 includes several "means plus function" limitations (i.e., means for carrying at least one item of laundry within said housing) under 35 U.S.C. §112, ¶ 6. Therefore, the claim is interpreted to cover the structure, material, or acts described in the specification and the equivalents thereof. The specification includes several constructions describing the corresponding structure of a means for carrying at least one item of laundry within said housing.

For example, page 14, line 25 to page 15, line 26 provides a description of constructions and corresponding structures of a means for carrying at least one item of laundry within said housing including the endless conveying belt 3 and the hanger-like support 6. These described constructions and corresponding structures are not disclosed in either Runde, Candor, Manuel, Feast, or Smith. Also, the equivalents of these structures are not disclosed in either Runde, Candor, Manuel, Feast, or Smith.

Neither Runde, Candor, Manuel, Feast, nor Smith disclose disclose, among other things, any of these constructions and corresponding structure of a means for carrying at least one item of laundry within said housing described in the specification. This means plus function limitation is construed to cover the structure of the constructions described in the specification. Also, Neither Runde, Candor, Manuel, Feast, nor Smith disclose disclose the equivalents of these constructions. Therefore, the prior art does not disclose all the claim limitations recited in Claim 17.

For these and other reasons, the prior art does not anticipate Claim 17, and withdrawal of the corresponding rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 2-18 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please note that Applicants have changed representation and are now represented by new counsel. The formal Revocation of Power of Attorney / New Power of Attorney and Change of Correspondence Address documents were previously filed in a separate paper.

Respectfully submitted,



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